

WATER YEAR 2000 – NEAR-TERM MEASURES TO AVOID UNANTICIPATED FISHERY AND WATER SUPPLY CONFLICTS

Issue: A joint Federal and State announcement by Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt and Governor Gray Davis is needed in early November 1999 regarding specific measures which are being initiated to avoid potential unanticipated fishery and water supply conflicts in Water Year 2000. Securing adequate funding to implement these measures is a critical prerequisite to making a meaningful announcement.

Background: During April through June 1999, delta smelt were salvaged in significant numbers at the State Water Project and Central Valley Project export facilities. As a result, SWP and CVP exports were reduced by over 500,000 AF. During the period of export curtailments, demands were being met almost entirely by releases from San Luis Reservoir. Eventually, the releases increased to the generation capacity. As a result the Department of Water Resources and the U.S. Bureau of Reclamation facing immediate water delivery shortages, water quality concerns for Santa Clara Valley Water District, and possible reductions in Water Year 2000 allocations.

Based on current water supply projections, DWR expects to fill the State share of SLR as early as the end of December. Further, USBR expects to almost fill the Federal share of SLR by mid-April and is pursuing using joint point of diversion to ensure complete recovery. This major change in projected water supply conditions (i.e. SLR storage recovery) is due to a number of factors. These factors include additional SWP pumping in August and September to help refill San Luis Reservoir, lower than expected SWP and CVP demands south of the Delta (due in part to cooler conditions this summer), and lower projected demands this fall. Also, a potentially significant water quality concern for SCVWD was averted when some SWP and CVP south of the Delta deliveries were deferred until after San Luis Reservoir reached its low point in August.

In the final analysis, major problems have been avoided in 1999 through careful coordination amongst agencies and stakeholders. Clearly favorable meteorological conditions and some measure of luck played a role. However, as demonstrated this year, even with full recovery of SLR storage, potential unanticipated fishery and water supply conflicts could occur in Water Year 2000. Pursuing several measures now can help avoid the potential of repeating a similar situation in Water Year 2000. These measures include: 1) securing joint point of diversion for the CVP; 2) increasing Banks pumping in the summer months; 3) flexing the export-to-inflow ratio; 4) acquiring water; 5) shifting demands; and 6) leasing storage space. The following pages describe details regarding each of the above measures including financial terms, implementation issues, and recommendations. Each also provides CALFED member agency representatives accountable for developing the measures in a timely manner

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The attached table shows an initial list of measures that could be implemented this water year (October '99 – September '00). The list includes estimated cost of implementing the measures, as well as an estimate of the amount of water that could be purchased, stored, or moved to San Luis Reservoir. The actual amounts of water made available under these measures would be affected by hydrologic conditions and regulatory decisions, including implementation of the Department of Interior's (b)(2) Plan.

Schedule: CALFED member agencies will continue to work with the CALFED Ops Group and CALFED Small Group to refine the list into a final package of actions. Funding may come from a number of sources. The package will be returned to the CALFED Policy Group at its November 17 meeting for approval of any CALFED funding.